

Bellmore-Merrick Rabbis share Passover messages

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This Passover, celebrate the miracle of life

Dear Friends,

I have spent almost four months studying each day the Talmud tractate of Pesachim, which delves deeply into every possible detail and tradition of Passover. So much about the Passover ritual has evolved over the millennia. The Passover offering gave way to brisket, some of the four questions were reformulated and, thankfully, matzah balls and gefilte fish came to supplement the foods on the Seder plate.

What always remains the same is the ever-powerful story of the miraculous liberation of our people from slavery. Both the Torah narrative and the Haggadah are eternal reminders that in every age unforeseen miracles have turned darkness into light. Almost every page of the Haggadah underscores our people's way of looking at life-teaching and telling us that Jews never despair of the possibility of the miraculous.

Last Passover as Covid-19 became the modern-day incarnation of "The Angel of Death," we began to feel ourselves virtually helpless in the face of this virus. But as we prepare for this Passover there are three vaccines available and each day over two million people are receiving the lifesaving vaccinations. That to me is absolutely miraculous. Those shots going into arms is our crossing through the sea — our moment of salvation! Sadly, our joy is diminished knowing that so many never had the opportunity to experience this moment along with us.

Some weeks ago, I came across a teaching in Pesachim which ties the miracles of Passover back to the time of creation. Our sages spoke of a litany of miracles created just before the first Shabbat. As God was putting the finishing touches on creation, He made certain to provide the possibility for the miraculous in every age. The world, they understood, could not endure without faith that a miracle was waiting to happen. How right they were!

Passover awaits and once again we have experienced the absolutely miraculous. Our world is coming back to life — hope is being reborn and, slowly but surely, we are coming back together.

So, open the door for Eliyahu, drink the wine of deliverance, sing songs of freedom and be grateful for the miracle of life renewed.

Zissen Pesach,

Rabbi Charles A. Klein

Merrick Jewish Centre

A new outlook on life this Passover

As the night stars appear this Saturday night — March 27th — Jews around the world will be celebrating the entrance of the holiday of Passover with a festive meal called the Seder. The Hebrew word “seder” means “order”, as in schedule. (The literal translation of the Israeli phrase “b’seder” is that everything is under control, though in practice a seasoned Israeli uses “b’seder” to mean, “Life is chaotic - no problem.”)

On Passover, we celebrate that there is an order to our world — a destiny, a purpose, a story that’s being played out and re-enacted over millennia. Since Passover last year, a world of bewildering chaos resulting from the Covid pandemic has forced us to ask some very probing questions of ourselves, of others, and our faith. The pleasurable distractions that seemed sufficient to create a facade of order from the hidden chaos in our psyche now have largely lost their luster.

How do we celebrate freedom - when we know that we, or others, are confined to isolation? The truth is that in past years we had the freedom to be close physically, yet we were isolated emotionally and spiritually from others and ourselves — a matzah ball floating in a soup of worries, fear and despair.

Now, we can face ourselves without the distractions, and open our souls to experience our true core identity: our innate connection with all humanity and with our Creator, with a life of meaning and an orderly path to follow. For a Jew, the Pesach “Seder” rituals keep a 3,000-year-old message alive, to be shared with all humanity: Every human being plays a unique part in our shared mission to unite humanity with our loving Creator, through study and practice of the Seven Universal Principles for all mankind, from the times of Adam and Noah in Genesis, to our society and for each of us today.

May you and your families experience true freedom and peace of mind to explore your destiny and to appreciate the destiny you share with your loved ones and with all of us around the world, in good health, safety, prosperity and joy.

For more information on the holiday of Passover or the Seven Universal Principles for all mankind, visit chabadjewishlife.org/Passover and chabadjewishlife.org/62221.

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